

REMARKS

In response to the above-noted Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification to incorporate proper headings as requested by the Examiner.

Claims 1-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mellinger et al.

Claims 1-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Bono et al.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of record are requested in view of the following discussion.

In the Action, Examiner contends that Mellinger et al. discloses “retention means, 30, capable of deforming elastically under a pressure F.” The Examiner contends further that Bono et al. discloses “retention means, 153, capable of deforming elastically under a pressure F.”

In order to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102, it is necessary for the cited prior art to disclose each element of the claims. The relevant element as set forth in independent Claim 1 which Applicant submits is not taught by the prior art is:

“retention means (14, 15) adapted to deform elastically under a pressure F.”

In the application, the retention means are defined as elastic blades 14 and 15. As disclosed, for example, at page 12 beginning at line 19:

“each lug 33 and 34 comes into snap fitting engagement with the corresponding tooth, 19, 20 of the elastic blades 14, 15.” The “retention of the lugs 33, 34 is obtained by the elasticity of the blades 14, 15 which return to the rest position after the passage of the lugs 33, 34 over the corresponding teeth 19, 20.”

Thus, it should be apparent the elasticity of blades 14, 15 is not a mere design expedient but rather is an element of the invention which must be met by the prior art in order to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102.

In this connection, in Mellinger et al., the alleged retention means 30 is defined at column 4, line 23 as outside lateral faces 30. Mellinger et al. does not describe lateral faces 30 as being elastic, or otherwise capable of deforming elastically, nor does any other element of Mellinger et al. appear to meet this structural limitation. Simiarly, in Bono et al., retention means 153 is

defined simply as a head portion, see column 6 line 15, with no mention or suggestion of the element being capable of deforming elastically. Further, no other element of Bono et al. appears to meet this limitation.

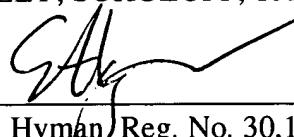
Inasmuch as the cited prior art clearly does not contain an element in Applicant's independent Claim 1, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claim 1, as well as all the claims which depend from Claim 1, cannot be maintained under 35 U.S.C. 102.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-26, all of which depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN

Date: 7/20, 2006

By: 

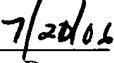
Eric S. Hyman Reg. No. 30,139

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025
(310) 207-3800

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on 7/20/06.


Vi Hoang


7/20/06
Date